

ings on Starve Island, off the south-eastern exposure of Put-in-Bay, but we were not able to visit it.

On Pelee Island we found the Brown Thrashers in force, one Sparrow and three Marsh Hawks fussing around the point, five Sanderlings and three Red-backed Sandpipers on the point, decidedly more Cardinals and Carolina Wrens than on any previous visit, and of the warblers, Yellow, Pine, Prairie, Chestnut-sided, Black and White, Redstart, Oven-bird, Louisiana Water-Thrush and Yellow-breasted Chat, which were not seen on the previous visit, besides the Northern Yellow-throat, Magnolia, and Canadian Warblers, which were recorded in 1905. Baltimore Orioles were also common, and one Downy and one Hairy Woodpecker were seen at the swamp. Two Field Sparrows, two Olive-sided Flycatchers, one Wilson's Thrush, a female Mallard, many Soras and many Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were also seen. Most of the other birds noted in 1905 were in the same numbers as then.

This concludes the fragmentary studies, and leads up to the detailed studies undertaken on Pelee Island in 1910 and on Point Pelee in 1911, to which they may be regarded as introductory.

MOMENT'S WITH THE LECONTE'S SPARROWS.

(*Passerherbulus lecontei*.)

BY ALTHEA R. SHERMAN, NATIONAL, IOWA.

This locality in northeastern Iowa cannot be far from the center of the migration route of Leconte's Sparrows. The wet meadow that stretches on either side of our back fence seems to offer an ideal stopping-place for this species, yet a faithful outlook maintained for years has failed to furnish a fleeting glimpse of one of these bright little birds. During the past autumn (1911) unfavorable conditions in the home meadow forced me to seek the sparrow migrants in a similar one situated a quarter of a mile away, and farther up the same ra-

vine, located in some abandoned village lots and abutting on an unfrequented street.

There around a water-hole grew a patch of weeds, triangular in shape and measuring about seventy-five feet on each side. The weeds were mostly rag-weeds, interspersed with some Spanish needles and smart-weed and a few sunflowers. The sloping ground on the west was covered with pig-weeds, while on the level land to the north and east grew the wild grass of the slough. The attraction of weeds and water were sufficient to draw numbers of nearly all the sparrow species that pass this way; the handsome Fox and the no less striking Harris's Sparrows were there in small numbers; Swamp Sparrows were numerous, and at the height of their migration, Lincoln's Sparrows outnumbered the Song Sparrows, as many as a dozen being present at one time. Among the rarer of the visitors were a Henslow's Sparrow and a Bittern. The first Leconte's Sparrow was found there on September 23, and the last one was seen on October 20.

Since the days of Audubon the Leconte's Sparrow has been termed "shy," "skulking" or "elusive" as is exemplified by Dr. R. M. Anderson's comment in *The Birds of Iowa*, when he says: "It is seldom seen on account of its habit of skulking in the thick dead grass along the borders of sloughs and in low places. It seldom rises unless almost stepped on, flies a short distance, dropping out of sight again in the dense grasses." This characteristic is implied in a statement of Kumlien and Hollister taken from their *Birds of Wisconsin*: "One of the most difficult birds imaginable to collect, as it is never seen until flushed, must be shot on the wing, and last, but not least, FOUND after it is killed." The behavior of the Leconte's Sparrow that came under my observation did not conform to the usual descriptions. Why this was so may be a difficult problem to solve, unless the absence of all collectors had something to do with it.

In the period of four weeks from the first to the last date of their appearance an absence from home and inclement weather prevented visits to their haunts on eight days, leaving

twenty days upon which the place was visited. Four of the species were in sight at the same time on one day; three were seen together on two days, and on other two days two were in sight, while a single Leconte's Sparrow was seen on seven days, making in all twelve days out of twenty upon which they appeared. The length of my daily visits varied from half to a whole hour. The views of the birds were not purely transitory, but lasted from five minutes to nearly a half hour.

The first one to be seen sat on a weed-top that raised itself out of the slough grass. There the bird remained fully twenty minutes, sometimes uttering its insect-like chirp. On several days a bird sounded this note. If the singer was on the fence nervous, wren-like jerks shook its body. At other times these birds sat very quietly on grass-stem, weed-stalk or fence.

The second Leconte's Sparrow was met on September 25. I was standing quite near the fence when the sparrow alighted on it about twenty feet away; it visited a rag-weed, then returned to the fence, this time no farther than fifteen feet from me. It was in sight about seven minutes. At this same spot a week earlier by mutual advances the distance between a Short-billed Marsh Wren and myself was reduced to less than three feet. On the following day as I approached their habitat three Leconte's Sparrows sat on the fence awaiting me; when within thirty-five feet of them I sat down; during a stay of upward an hour one or two of them were visible most of the time. Streaks on the breast of one proclaimed it a juvenile. Nine days later three again were seen, one of which had a streaked breast. One visit was made in the rain; the bird sitting on the fence was not frightened away, although I carried an opened umbrella and sat down within thirty feet of it. Enough instances may have been given to show that these Leconte's Sparrows were not shy, skulking or elusive, and that it would be hard to admit that they were not as bold as their congeners all about them.

When perched on grass-stems their colors blended so well with the yellowing wild grass that the birds were not quickly recognized, but when sitting on the dead, brown weeds of

the patch they were most strikingly conspicuous. They were never seen on the western or pig-weed side of the patch, but appeared on its eastern border or in the slough grass. The only time one was seen feeding it was eating the seeds of a sunflower; having finished that repast it mounted to the top of the stalk, and flew from it to a field of ripened clover some eight or ten rods away. At the same time another of this species was making its way to the top of a small willow about eight feet high, which was the highest point any one of them was seen to have attained.

OBSERVATIONS OF BIRD-LIFE IN NORTHERN NEW JERSEY DURING THE WINTER OF 1910-1911.

BY LOUIS S. KOHLER.

Bird life this past winter has been unusually abundant throughout Northern New Jersey. In fact, my records have surpassed those of any year within the past decade, and it is my opinion that this profusion of residents and visitants was almost wholly due to the mildness and openness of the season. Owing to the lack of sufficient time, observations this season were curtailed to a large extent and were only made on those days available, whereas in previous years observances were made daily, and in view of this curtailment, it is my opinion that many species went unrecorded.

December began with cold, bracing weather and ice formed on a majority of the shallow ponds in this vicinity. This weather continued through the month until December 27th when it moderated slightly. Snow fell on the 4th to the depth of nine inches and again on the 11th and 12th three inches more fell. On Christmas Day, which was clear and cold with a biting westerly wind, a large portion of this snow still remained on the ground. On the 29th the temperature dropped below freezing and remained so until New Year's Eve. New Year's Day was marked by heavy clouds during the morning and a drizzling rain accompanied by a cold northwest wind in